

# RUSSIAN SCHOLARS AND THE QUR'ÂN: Historical Perspective of The Development of Russian Orientalists In The 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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**Abstrak: Ilmuan Rusia dan al-Qur'an: Perspektif Sejarah Perkembangan Orientalis Rusia abad ke 19 dan 20.** Setelah keberhasilan Mullah Usman Ibrahim pada abad ke 18, studi al-Qur'an di Rusia sejak abad ke 19 tidak mengalami kemajuan signifikan. Kondisi ini berlanjut hingga G.S. Sablukov dan D.N Boguslavskiy pada akhirnya menciptakan karya sendiri mereka tentang tafsir al-Qur'an pada masa paruh kedua abad ke 19. Perkembangan tradisi Rusia dalam pengkajian al-Qur'an semakin pesat ketika ilmuan Rusia yang lain, I. Yu. Krachkovsky, memperkenalkan pendekatan baru dalam memahami dan menginterpretasi Kitab Suci al-Qur'an bagi masyarakat Rusia pada awal abad ke 20. Dalam makalah ini penulis mengemukakan bahwa sangat disayangkan, ilmuan Rusia memasuki era kegelapan dalam pengkajian al-Qur'an ketika regim Komunis Soviet menagmbil alih kendali pemerintahan dan memperkenalkan kebijakan dan propaganda ateistis pada paruh kedua abad ke 20. Makalah ini berupaya untuk menganalisa sejarah perkembangan studi al-Qur'an dalam kondisi sosial, kultur dan politik atmosfir akademis Rusia.

**Key Words:** Qur'an, Qur'anic studies, Russian Orientalists, interpretation

## Introduction

The development of Qur'anic studies among Russian orientalists in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries was closely related to the previous facts of the intellectual tradition of this nation on this particular issue. Also, the development of western orientalists views on Islam affected the Russian orientalists, especially in the field of Qur'anic studies.<sup>1</sup> In general,

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<sup>1</sup> See: Wan Jamaluddin, "al-Qur'an in Europe an Russia: Historical Perspective on Early Development of the Tradition of Russian Orientalism", in *Jurnal al-Bayan*, vol. VII (Kuala Lumpur: The Academic of Islamic Studies Malaya University, 2009), p. 59-72; Wan Jamaluddin, "Peter The Great and Qur'anic Studies in Russia", *Jurnal Glasnost*, vol. III Januari-Agustus (Jakarta: Fakultas Ilmu Budaya (FIB) Universitas Indonesia, 2008).

experts believe that the history of Qur'anic studies and translation in Russia was greatly influenced by four main occasions, including: *First*, the formalization of adopting Christianity as the official religion for the Russian; *Secondly*, the occupation of Constantinople—the capital city of Byzantium imperium—by the Ottoman Empire in 1453; *Third*, long lasting competition with the Islamic kingdoms of Volga and Krim; *Fourth*, the amalgamation of some Muslim populated areas into the imperium of Russia.<sup>2</sup>

The historical sources in Russia inform us that the proof that Islam and Qur'an having penetrated into the life of the Russian was due to the translation of Qur'an from Roman-Greek and Latin-Polski which tended to be anti-Islam.<sup>3</sup> The occupation of Kazan city – one of the centers of Islamic civilization along the Volga river – by the army of Ivan Grozny in 1552 showed similar tendency. Ironically, this occupation changed the way of the Russian in viewing Islam. Their hatred view gradually lessened, and they eventually became positively interested in Muslim culture and life.<sup>4</sup>

This writing is trying to overview the historical dynamics of the Russian orientalists in developing the tradition of Qur'anic studies during the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and to analyze whether or not it had relation and/or it influenced the developmental process of western (European) orientalists' tradition.

## Russia and Qura'nic Studies in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new spirit on Qur'anic studies in Russia boosted as the emergence of two editions of Qur'an and its translation with Petersburg and Kazan versions initiated in 1787 by a noted Russian Muslim, Mullah Usman Ibrahim. Unfortunately, his step was not followed by others. As such, up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was no more the writings of the interpretation of Qur'an which were scientifically recognized, as though the Qur'an and translation written by Mullah Usman Ibrahim had not had any equal competitors till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

Among the orientalists, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was well-known as the new era of Qur'anic studies. Western scholars paid much attention to Qur'anic studies, especially to the chronological reconstruction of Qur'an as the words of God received by Prophet Muhammad. It was carried out by intensively examining the Islamic traditional sources

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<sup>2</sup> S.M. Prozorov (ed.), *Islam Na Territoriy Bivshey Rassiiskoy Imperiy: Ensiklopedicheskiy Slovar'* (*Islam in the ex Imperium of Russia: An Encyclopedia*) (Moscow: n.p., 1998), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Ye A. Rezvan, *Koran i Yego Mir. (al-Koran and It's World)* (Saint Petersburg: Branch of The Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences, 2001), p. 383-390. See more: N.I. Serikov, "O Nyekatorikh Aspektakh Padkhoda k Issledovaniyu Arabo-Vizantiiskikh Otnasheniy X-XI Vekakh" in *Sovremennoy Zarubezhnoy Istoriografi*, VV, 1983, p. 246-251.

<sup>4</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Ye A. Rezvan, "Koran i Koranistika (al-Qur'an and Qur'anic Studies)" in *Islam: Istoriograficheskiye Ocherki (Some Analysis on Islamic Historiography)* (Moscow: n.p., 1991), p. 15.

and learning the Qur'an itself as the historical references mainly of the Medina phase of Prophet Muhammad's prophetic period. Besides that, they also paid attention to the Qur'anic style, vocabulary and so forth. In other words, ever since, Qur'an has become the object of research through both literary critical method and modern historical critical method. Similar condition also occurred among the Russian orientalists in conducting Qur'anic studies.<sup>6</sup>

It is believed that the turning point of the Qur'anic studies in Russia was the issuance of the instruction of the Russian kingdom on December 15, 1800. It contained the warning to limit the publishing of Islamic literatures in Russia. Thus, in 1801-1802, various Arabic typographic instruments in Saint-Petersburg were moved to Kazan city (Tatarstan). Eventually, it made Kazan one of the biggest centers of publishing and printing of Qur'an in Europe and well-known and widely recognized by western (European) orientalists (1802-1859). It was recorded that there were around 150,000 sets of Qur'an printed in this city, even it was also claimed that the product was used in the East.<sup>7</sup>

Not long after, still in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, another Russian orientalist—A. Kolmakov—(died in 1804) could accomplished his translation of Qur'an.<sup>8</sup> Yet, like his senior M. I Verevkin (1709)<sup>9</sup> who translated Qur'an not from its original language—Arabic—but rather from French translation written by Due Riue,<sup>10</sup> he made a Russian translation from English version written by G. Seil (1679-1736).<sup>11</sup> Seil's work which was published in London in 1734 partly adopted the interpretation of al-Baydawi al-Zamakhsari and of al-Jalalain.<sup>12</sup> Not only translated into Russian, it was also translated into French and German.

The Russian translation version of Qur'an by A. Kolmakov and M. I Verevkin greatly influenced the life of the Russian, especially related to their attitudes towards Islam, along the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> It did not only inspire A.S. Pushkin with his poems quoting 33 chapters of Qur'an in 1824, but also make some Russian public figures interested in Islam such as P.Ya Chadayev, L.N. Tolstoi, V.S. Salovyev as well as M.L. Mikhailov (1829-1865).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>PA. Gryaznevich, "Koran v Rassii (Izucheniye, Perevodi, Izdaniya)", in *Islam: Religiya, Obshchestvo, Gosudarstvo* (Moscow: n.p., 1984), p. 3-5.

<sup>7</sup>Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> See A. Kolmakov, *Al-Koran Magometov* (Saint-Petersburg: n.p., 1792).

<sup>9</sup> M.I. Verevkin, *Kniga Al-Koran Aravlyanina Magometa*, izh. 1-2 (Saint-Petersburg: n.p., 1790).

<sup>10</sup>*L'Al-coran de Mahomet*, translate d'Arabe en Francois par le Sieur du Ryer, 1647.

<sup>11</sup> Rezvan, "Koran i Koranistika", p. 14-15.

<sup>12</sup> G. Sale, *The Koran Commonly Called Alcoran of Mohamed* (London: n.p., 1734).

<sup>13</sup>See: Wan Jamaluddin, "Puisi-puisi Qur'ani dari Rusia" in *Khazanah Islam dan Tradisi Intelektual di Rusia (Goresan Pena selama Studi di Rusia)* (Bandar Lampung: Fakta Press IAIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2009), p. 121-140.

<sup>14</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 51.

In addition, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—in 1864 to be exact—another Russian version of translation of Qur'an was published, but still not translated from its original language, Arabic. This time it was translated by K. Nikolayev from French version composed by A.B. Kazimirsky. Nikolayev's work has been reprinted for five times.<sup>15</sup>

Still within the same period, "Sinoda-Arkhiyev Kazan", Georgia published his spectacular work, "*Pol'niy Korkordans Korana*" (the Complete Concordance of Qur'an), a reference of key words of vocabulary or idiomatic expressions in Qur'an. It was written by Mirza Muhammad Ali Ghazi Kasim-Ogle (Aleksandra Kasimovich) Kazem-Bek (1802-1870), ex-dean of faculty of Oriental Studies, Saint Petersburg University. He was famous for the founder of Kazan school of thought of Russian Orientalism tradition, and due to his great works he was acknowledged as the "Patriarch" (Eastern Orthodox Bishop). Those were his intellectual achievements for about 25 years starting from 1834.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, the world of Islamic Studies was jazzed up with the release of some other concordances of Qur'an for instance *Nujum Qur'an* published in Calcutta in 1836 and *Concordantiae Corani Arabicae* by Gustav Flugel published in 1842.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, many experts consider that Kazem-Bek's work is better than the others for its use of scientific approach. It was not composed etymologically-based, but rather alphabetically-based to ease the non-Arabic readers.<sup>18</sup>

Kazem-Bek's concordance was the proof of the reemergence of the Russian Orientalists intellectual spirit which had been left-behind of their counterparts in the west. Further, ever since there were a lot of publications of internationally recognized Islamic and Qur'anic manuscripts kept either in the Asian Museum of Academy of Science, Saint Petersburg or in the Museum of State (*Publichnaya Biblioteka*): I.F. Gotval'd in Kazan (in 1863), V.F. Girgas in Petersburg (in 1881).<sup>19</sup>

The greatest achievement of Russian Orientalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century occurred as two great works of the translation of Qur'an into Russian from its original language—Arabic—in 1871 written by D.N. Boguslovskiy and in 1878 written by G.S. Sablukov in Kazan city were published. G.S. Sablukov was a Russian Orientalist in Kazan (Tatarstan) who could successfully translated Qur'an into Russian completed with some interpretation. His writings (1879 and 1884) were much influenced by popular works within the Tatar. Sablukov's works were published by Ye. Malov in Kazan in 1875.

Sablukov's Qur'anic translation was thought as one of the Russian Kazan school of thought orientalists greatest works because it was much referred by western scholars such as Gustav Weil in 1878 in his composition "*Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in der Koran*"

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> G. Flugel, *Concordantiae Corani Arabicae* (Lipsiae: n.p., 1842).

<sup>18</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 51; See further: Rezvan. "Koran i Koranistika", p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 51

(Introduction to Historical-Critical Study of Qur'an).<sup>20</sup> Like Weil, Sablukov emphasized the importance of admitting the tradition of Islamic scholars viewing the chapters of Qur'an as the original units of words of God because they could be chronologically arranged based on the sources of Islamic tradition which could be scientifically approved using the western method. The phases of Qur'anic delivery in Islamic tradition (Mecca and Medina periods) could be elaborated by observing the historical events provided in the Qur'an itself and in other reliable sources.<sup>21</sup>

Sablukov's step which was accommodated by Gustave Weil in the following time was adopted by many other western scholars like Theodor Noeldeke (died in 1930) or Friedrich Schwally (died in 1919) in their collaborative work in 1860 "*Geschichte des Qorans*" (the History of Qur'an), and also a French Orientalist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Regis Blachere, in his work "*Le Coran: Traduction Selon un Essai de Reclassement des Sourates*" (Qur'an: Translation based on the Study of Rearrangement of the Chapters) published in around 1949-1950.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the translation of Qur'an, Sablukov also created a widely-accepted composition entitled "*Prilozheniya*" (Introduction), which was considered the best writing in Europe for the category of the introductory study of Qur'an. In 1884, some of his works were published even though he had passed away. His translation of Qur'an, in particular, was reprinted in 1907 and 1961.<sup>23</sup>

The translation of Qur'an among Russian Orientalists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a new tendency of tradition. They were seemingly influenced by the scientific tradition and way of thought of Islamic scholars. It can be seen from the Sablukov's above-mentioned works and other Russian Orientalists' works, take for example, D.N. Boguslovskiy who quoted a lot of Islamic references in Ottoman Turkish like *Tafsir Al-Mawakib* by Ismail Farug (died in 1840) or references in Persia like "*Tafsir Husaini*" by Husain Al-Wai'iz (died in 1505).<sup>24</sup>

Obviously, Sablukov's success was helped by the Russian's tendency to comprehend the characteristics of the Tatar, a common tendency among the Russian missionaries in Kazan. Then, the success of D.N. Boguslovskiy reflected the Russian foreign affairs political policy towards the eastern world, that is, trying to learn Qur'an as the principles of life of the Turks who lived side by side with the Russian in the south. The scholars did such a kind of approach as the circumstances required them to do so. Sablukov's translation was made to meet the demand of acquiring the complete picture of the Tatar's Islamic life, not to mention for the sake of the missionaries of the Orthodox Christianity. The

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<sup>20</sup> Rezvan. "Koran i Koranistika", p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Sablukov G, *Prilozheniya k Perevodu Korana* (Kazan: n.p., 1879).

<sup>22</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> Ye A. Rezvan, "Koran i Koranisti", p. 17-18.

<sup>24</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 52. See: Boguslavskiy, *Koran: Perevodi Kommentari D.N. Boguslavskogo (Al-Qur'an: Translation and Comentaries of D.N. Boguslavskiy)*, manuscript printed by Ye. A. Rezvan dan A.N. Veiraukha.

work of General D.N. Boguslovskiy was closely related to acquiring Russian wider political influence in the East as he was the first Ambassador of Russia in Constantinople. That is why, his work was one of the ways to learn Qur'an as the principles of life of the Turks who had become the Russian rival for many years. Boguslovskiy's translation was a bit similar to the views of A.B. Kazimirskiy—one of the translators of Qur'an into French—who once lived as a professional translator in the East, or with certain limitations similar to E. Werri—an Englishman who translated Qur'an in India, the occupation of the United Kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was becoming the period of Russian political expansion to the Middle East and Central Asia as we know that in 1868 Turkmenistan and the surrounding area occupied by Russia.<sup>26</sup> Ever since many Muslims lived under the imperium of Russia. Millions of Muslims there kept on practicing their Islamic way of thinking and way of life including their Qur'anic tradition—reciting and studying, and kept in touch with other Muslims in other countries.

It was also noted that the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the era of the Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism emergence in the Islamic world as a symbol of Islamic awakening. Undoubtedly, this kind of spirit had affected the development of the Qur'anic studies, and some works reflected that condition in Russia. Let's take for examples, the writings of Musa Jarullah Bigiyev (1817-1949) and Ata'ullah Bayazitov, two great Muslim figures and Grand Imam of Saint Petersburg mosque, who were influenced by the thought of Sayyid Akhmad Khan (1817-1898), Jamal al-Dîn al-Afghanî (1839-1909), Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), Rashid Ridha (1865-1935) with his *al-Manar* interpretation. Accordingly, in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Russia there was a rivalry between “the Islamic Revolutionist” and “the Islamic Traditionalists” (*Jadidi* vs. *Kadimi*), each using their own version of Qur'anic interpretation.<sup>27</sup>

## Russia and Qura'nic Studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were quite many publications written in Arabic. It was reported by Anas B. Khalidov that within the period of 1787-1917 there were 172 publications of Qur'an, 191 selected chapters of Qur'an, and more than 100 excerpts of Qur'anic verses. Besides that, there were a lot of publications of guidance of prayer books, and also brochures of magic spells.<sup>28</sup>

In this century, it was I Yu Krachkovskiy, one of the Russian Orientalists, who firstly issued the importance of employing a new approach in translating Qur'an. Unlike G.S. Sablukov, I Yu Krachkovskiy believed that Qur'an was an epigraph of a certain era, so that

<sup>25</sup> Rezvan, “Koran i Koranistika”, p. 18-19.

<sup>26</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 52-53.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

he was trying to keep aside the traditional interpretations while at the same time trying to provide more accurate translation. For that purpose, he used the modern linguistic aspects and Qur'anic environment by relying on modern philological method and techniques. He started by exploring the proper explanations of certain texts of Qur'an which he thought "hard to understand".<sup>29</sup>

Within the period of 1921-1930, some manuscripts of I Yu Krachkovskiy's works were found. They contained translation of and commentaries on Qur'an, and were publicized in 1963 after his death. The manuscripts were then reprinted in 1986 although I Yu Krachkovskiy had never planned to publish them. Since his colleagues, other Russian Orientalists, thought that his work based on philological technique in translating Qur'an was considered far greater than other Russian, even European scholars, then they demanded that his manuscripts be published.<sup>30</sup> His approach and technique showed the importance of critical analysis in implementing various translation methods. Unfortunately, those manuscripts were not completely written and arranged, so it is hard for us to determine the following role and influence of I Yu Krachkovskiy among the Russian Orientalists.<sup>31</sup>

I Yu Krachkovskiy produced his works very close to the beginning of the crisis of Islamic studies among Russian Orientalists (the Soviet era). In this era, approaches and methods of Qur'anic studies were greatly affected by the propaganda targets of the atheists. Furthermore, Both Qur'an and its translation disappeared from the libraries. Even worse, to support the propaganda of the atheist, some false statements related to Islam were issued like the period of Qur'an delivery was 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries and Qur'an was gathered into one and kept into book in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (the reign of Sultan Usman I). Next, in 1931 some Russian Orientalists in Moscow led by Ye. A. Belayev proposed a hypothesis stating that Qur'an was merely the creation of some certain people. In short, their analysis, non-scientific research methodology, and conclusion were very tendentious. Their action to collect and improperly refer to tendentious research findings of European scholars led them to come up with non-scientific works.<sup>32</sup>

In this context, I Yu Krachkovskiy's work and K.C. Kashtaleva's paper about the terminologies of Qur'an, I.N. Vinnikov ethnographic study as well as V.V. Bartold's research were more on highlighting and analyzing the sources and the materials of Qur'anic studies. Seemingly, they got difficulty to escape from the dogmatic approach of the Russian Orientalist during the Soviet era (1930-1940).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Rezvan, "Koran i Koranistika", p. 19-20.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18-19.

<sup>31</sup> Gryaznevich, *Predisloviye ko Vtoromu Izdaniyu, Koran; Perevod: Kommentari I Yu Krachkovskogo (Introductory Remarks of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, al-Qur'an: Translation and Commentaries of I Yu Krachkovskiy)* (Moscow: n.p., 1986).

<sup>32</sup> Prozorov, *Islam Na Territoriy*, p. 54-55.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54-55.

The growth of Qur'anic studies in Russia was also affected by the situation in Islamic world in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a whole. In 1919, 1923, and 1928 pioneered by King Fuad I, some Muslim scholars successfully published a new version of Qur'an in Cairo, and it was decided that it would be used by all Muslims in the world. This collective decision brought about a negative impact on the decreasing spirit to study the other variants of *qira'at* (Seven ways of reciting Qur'an). However, it should be seen as an important moment in Qur'anic studies because the outcome was widely accepted by Muslim scholars in the world and also European.

After the "success of Cairo", Qur'anic studies changed a lot. Unlike before, now the translation and interpretation of Qur'an was carry out with the interference of the current condition of Islamic world. It was parallel to the emergence of some movement of reformation of Islam with the theme of "Awakening of Islam" and "Returning to the Great Tradition of Islam". In this context, the unification of various versions of Qur'an became urgent, mainly to be aware of the importance of the unity of Islamic world. It was very unfortunate that this momentum was broken with the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire, started with the limitation of the Caliph's authority only on religion affairs without any power on state affairs (in 1922), and eventually the by-force elimination of the Caliph's institution (in 1924).

A lot of commentaries and judgments from people related to the publishing of the new version of Qur'an. Some people took it as the big ambition of King Fuad I of Saudi Arabia to show up his power and influence in Islamic world, while some others thought that it was a success to be the symbol of the authority of Muslim scholars over the western orientalists.<sup>34</sup>

The success of Cairo, as a matter of fact, did not stop the practice of other versions of studying and translating Qur'an. Muslims in the west and also within the Zaidiyah sect of Shia in Yaman, kept the tradition of translation of "Warsh version" (died in 197 Hijriyah/ 812 AD). This kind of Qur'an can still be found nowadays not only in North Africa but also in Saudi Arabia and Cairo. At the same period, Qur'an of "Hafs version" was also released.<sup>35</sup>

At last, the success of Cairo and other versions of Qur'an have triggered the crisis of Islamic studies among western orientalists as the result of their hyper-critical approach in studying Islam. It was clear that G. Bergstrasser, A. Jeffrey and also I. Goldziher and many others within the period of 1927-1935 asserted the necessity to criticize the text of Qur'an.<sup>36</sup>

The hustle and bustle of the Islamic studies practice within the western Orientalists was unlikely to affect the Russian Orientalists for their being restrained by the propaganda

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<sup>34</sup>Rezvan, "Koran i Koranistika", p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> See: Brockett A, "The Value of the Hafs and Warsh Transmission for the Textual History of the Qur'an" in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an*, ed. A. Rippin (Oxford: n.p., 1988), p. 31-45.

<sup>36</sup> Rezvan, "Koran i Koranistika", p. 23.



of the communist and atheist. Up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Orientalists' priority of Islamic studies was still on how to bring I Yu Krachkovskiy's big dream into reality—creating the translation and interpretation of Qur'an based on the philological approach. In other words, up to entering the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was no new spirit of the Russian Orientalists in Qur'anic studies.

## **Conclusion**

Owing Fazlur Rahman's ideas—Professor on Islamic studies of University of Chicago, USA—about the categorization of western literature of Qur'anic studies,<sup>37</sup> it can be summed up that the tradition of Qur'anic studies within the Russian Orientalists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by the works which criticized the chronological sequence of Qur'anic verses and also those which were trying to elaborate the whole or certain aspects of the Qur'anic verses. In this era, the Russian Orientalists' works were mostly about the translation or the concordance of Qur'an. Yet, like the previous centuries (17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>), the translation of Qur'an in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was still done not by referring to the Arabic version, but by translating from other languages like French into Russian done by M.I Verevkin in 1709 over Due Riue's work; or K. Nikolayev in 1864 over A.B. Kazimirskiy's work, and also from English into Russian done by A. Kolmakov in 1802 over G. Seil.

The practice of Qur'anic translation of the Russian Orientalists reached its peak in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when D.N. Boguslovskiy (1871) and G.S. Sablukov (1878) could successfully translate Qur'an directly from its original language, Arabic. Further, it implied there was a new tendency in the tradition of Russian Orientalists where there was influence of Islamic scientific tradition in Islamic way of thinking upon them.

Unfortunately, the success of Qur'anic studies reached in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could be continued by the Russian Orientalists in the next century. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Orientalists' tradition of Islamic and Qur'anic studies was entering a critical condition (the dark era) restrained by the propaganda of the communism and atheism of the Soviet regime. This bad condition was a bit cheered up by the appearance of I Yu Krachkovskiy's work of translating Qur'an by employing modern philological method. It was believed that this work was far greater than any other works of the Russian as well as European Orientalists in his era. Unfortunately, this brilliant work was not completely composed, so that it is difficult to determine how much effect it might give to the tradition of Qur'anic studies.

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<sup>37</sup>Fazlur Rahman divided the category of western literature of al-Qur'anic studies into three, namely: 1. The works which were trying to find out the influence of Jewish-Christianity in Qur'an, 2. Those which were trying to criticize the chronological sequence of Qur'anic verses, and 3. Those which were trying to elaborate the whole or certain aspects of the Qur'anic verses. See: Fazlur Rahman, *Tema Pokok al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Pustaka Publisher, 1983).

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